

ABSTRACT

This research is presented as an autobiographical narrative inquiry about one teacher's experience of living with mental illness. The main objective of this research is to contribute to expanding our understanding of how our education systems must include acceptance and inclusion of the large number of students, educators, school trustees, education bureaucrats, parents and administrators who live with mental illness. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, mental illness will impact one in two Canadians by age 40 with the onset of symptoms occurring during adolescence, making the school system an important public institution for recognizing and treating mental illness. Yet, there continues to be stigma and fear around mental illness, which may hinder peoples' ability to recognize it in themselves or others.

The autobiographical texts contained in this dissertation emerged as I, the researcher, examined my own context in relation to who I was as a researcher, and in particular, as an educational researcher, and specifically, as a teacher, and even more specifically, a teacher with mental illness. My particular illnesses were anxiety and eating disorders. The texts are a collection of stories, journal entries, and report card comments interspersed with and analyzed in relation to literature that includes academic theory, research, poetry, and fiction. I am following in the tradition of others such as Pelias (2016) who puts themselves on display as a researcher "in the belief that an emotionally vulnerable, linguistically evocative, and sensuously poetic voice can place us closer to the subjects we wish to study" (p. 1). In this study I put mental illness on display to examine it from the perspective of curiosity and openness rather than from a place of stigma or fear.

I surmise that if a teacher's educational responsibility is to be open to what Biesta (2013) pens is the call to act in the intervention of others, then one such act is showing up, with one's struggles and vulnerabilities, and being open and compassionate to the struggles and vulnerabilities of others.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Place of Birth: Halifax, Nova Scotia

Academic Studies: BA, The University of Victoria, 1989
BED, The University of Victoria, 1992
MED, The University of Victoria, 2002

Current Position: Education Officer, Ministry of Education

GRADUATE STUDIES

Field of Study: Teacher identity, Mental Illness, Educational Policy

Courses

| | |
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| EDST 601A | First Year Doctoral Seminar |
| EDST 593A | Ethics in Educational Leadership |
| EDST 508A | Research Methods 1 |
| EDST 577 | Social Contexts of Educational Policy, Politics and Practice |
| EDST 508B | Research Methods 2 |
| EDST 582 | Indigenous Epistemology and Curriculum |
| EDST 580 | Directed Study |
| EDST 602B | Second Year Doctoral Seminar |
| EDST 690 | Ed.D. Thesis |

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

PROGRAMME

The Final Oral Examination
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
(Educational Leadership and Policy)

VIRGINIA MARIE REGO

BA, The University of Victoria, 1989
BED, The University of Victoria, 1992
MED, The University of Victoria, 2002

Monday, July 17, 2017, 4:00 pm
Room 202, Anthropology and Sociology Building
6303 North West Marine Drive
Latecomers will not be admitted

**“Can You See Me? One Teacher’s Autobiographical Narrative Inquiry
into Mental Illness”**

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